

COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

Combining and Uniting Resources

A REPORT ON THE MERGER AND ITS SUCCESS



Executive Summary

A primary goal of the merger of State Parks and the Division of Wildlife was to create more efficient and effective services through economies of scale and use of shared resources while creating a more comprehensive outdoor recreation mission for the agency. Since the merger legislation of 2011 and 2012, a great deal of work has been undertaken to plan and implement the merger. In order to achieve more efficient and effective services, CPW and DNR have taken several steps since the merger:

- Since 2011, CPW has abolished 48 permanent positions.
- Reduced the number of Commissioners from 14 to 11 and reduced the number of Commission meetings from 18 to 9.
- CPW streamlined the Impact Assistance Grant program with a single, new, individualized web grant application page for each county that has most fields pre-populated to make the application process for parks and wildlife grants as efficient for the counties as possible.
- Customers can now buy a park pass or register a boat at 18 more offices around the state. In addition, hunting and fishing licenses are available at all 42 state parks.
- CPW has created a single aquatic nuisance species program. Training, administration and other functions are combined into a cohesive program.
- CPW is developing an “Integrated Parks and Wildlife System” (IPAWS) for managing the sale of licenses, permits, and registrations will vastly improve customer service (e.g., one-stop shopping) while reducing administrative costs.
- Two separate volunteer programs have been merged into one comprehensive program allowing CPW to further expand volunteer opportunities. (CPW has more than 6,500 individual volunteers, contributing nearly \$7.5 million worth of hours, equivalent to an additional 163 full time employees).
- CPW’s outreach to schools continues to expand through programs like SOLE (Schools and Outdoor Learning Environments, with funding from GOCO), internship opportunities, and Teaching Environmental Science Naturally (TEN).
- The merger of Parks and Wildlife has formed a team of capital development professionals with a wide array of skills and abilities allowing for efficiencies throughout the capital process.
- CPW merged 2 separate law enforcement academies into one academy.
- Two separate websites were merged into one responsive website. Since the March 2014 launch, more than 1.6 million users from all 50 states and more than 175 countries have viewed the web pages more than 11 million times.



Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Combining and Uniting Resources

A report on the merger and its success

A primary goal of the merger of State Parks and the Division of Wildlife was to create more efficient and effective services through economies of scale and use of shared resources while creating a more comprehensive outdoor recreation mission for the agency. Since the merger legislation of 2011 and 2012, a great deal of work has been undertaken to plan and implement the merger.

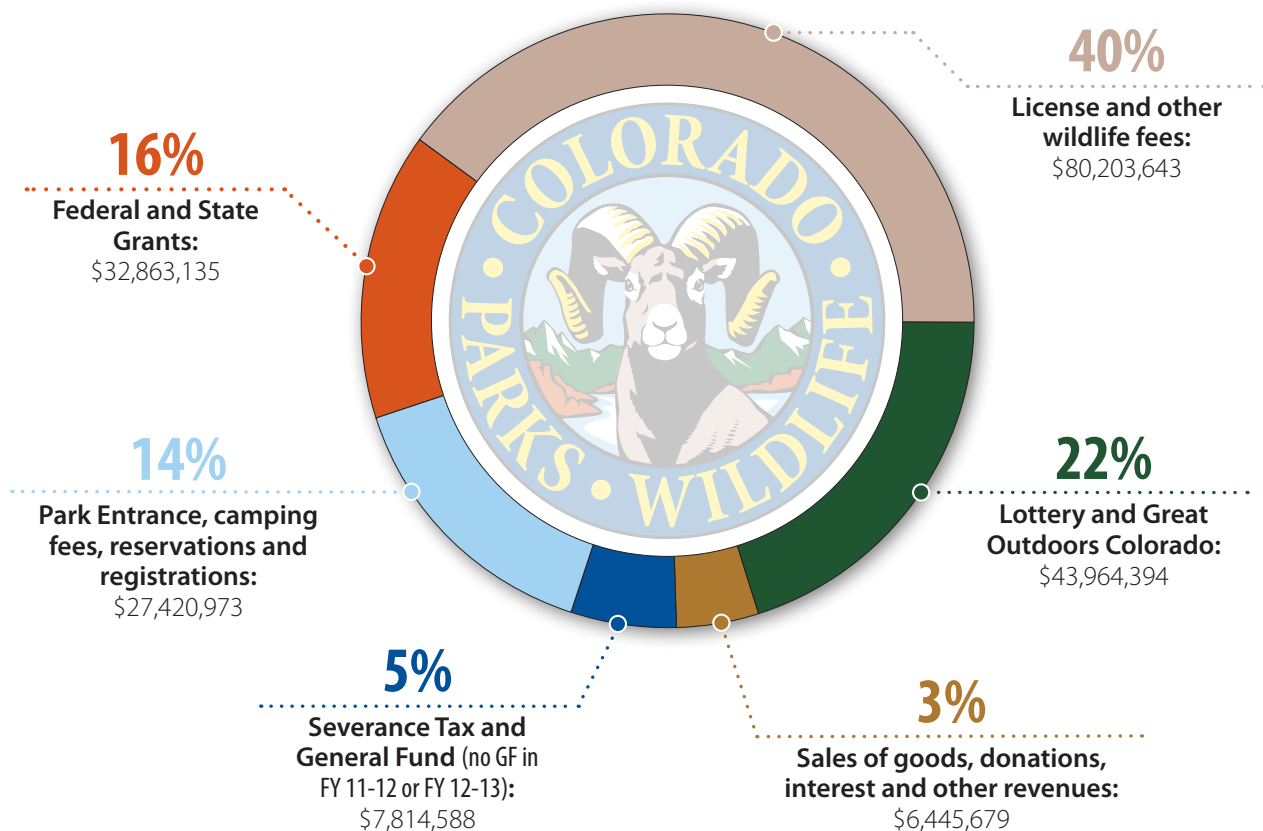
A review of activities that preceded the merger provides valuable historical context. Prior to the merger, the former Division of Wildlife implemented a series of budget reductions to address declining revenues, including one-time reductions in capital expenditures of \$15.7 million and \$11.5 million made in FY 09-10 and FY 10-11, respectively.

Also, State Parks took aggressive steps to address reductions in revenue several years prior to the merger. As recently as FY 08-09, State Parks received \$6.7 million in General

Funds, but by FY 11-12, this had dropped to zero. To adapt, State Parks took the following steps: eliminated 5 percent of its permanent positions and 10 percent of its seasonal employees; increased fees for daily passes, camping reservations and boat registration; significantly reduced administrative costs; cut services at Bonny Lake State Park during the winter months; and redirected certain funds to cover operating shortfalls.

From July 2011 through February 2012, with the creation of Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the agency developed a Merger Implementation Plan which was approved by the Parks and Wildlife Commission February 9, 2012 and delivered to the Colorado legislature in April of 2012. Since then, CPW has proceeded to implement the merger plan, and will continue to work to create an efficient and comprehensive outdoor recreation agency.

Colorado Parks & Wildlife Revenue Sources Total Revenue \$198,712,410 (FY 12-13)



Realized Savings and Efficiencies of Merged Division Resources

In order to achieve more efficient and effective services through economies of scale and use of shared resources, CPW has taken several steps since the merger. Below is a list of realized savings and efficiencies that have already resulted from the merger:

- Since 2011, CPW has abolished 48 permanent positions
- As a result of HB12-1317, the Parks and Wildlife Commission was reorganized in 2012 to reduce its membership by three commissioners, from 14 to eleven. This yields further annual savings in per diem, lodging, mileage, printing and associated costs. Merging the Parks Board and the Wildlife Commission also reduced the number of annual meetings from an average of 18 separate Board and Commission meetings to 9 meetings each year. Additionally, legislation has provided more discretion for the CPW Commission to work in a more efficient and cost-effective manner than was previously allowed.
- Prior to the merger, the uniforms in use by over 200 commissioned law enforcement officers in the two agencies were not identical. New uniform standards have been adopted, including clothing, patches, hats and badges. In some cases this required replacement of existing uniform items. The selection of the new uniform standards, and the implementation of the new standards, was approached with the intent of minimizing costs. For example, shirts were re-patched instead of being replaced and the new standards were based on existing uniforms to minimize the degree of replacement required. Other minor startup costs include updating signs at major administrative offices, and updating websites and selected publications. While one-time transition costs for uniform components, badges and patches amounted to about \$225,000, CPW has minimized to the extent possible transitional expenses resulting from the merger.

- Both the State Parks and the Division of Wildlife, and their respective boards, had distinct rule-making procedures. The merger required that these rule-making processes be reconciled and integrated. During 2012, CPW combined the regulatory processes of the two previous agencies into one process managed by a single Regulations Manager. A consistent and reliable review schedule that allows for regular and timely regulatory changes has been established. In January 2013, the Parks and Wildlife Commission streamlined and combined the two divisions' former rule-making policies. The new process features a reduction from a three-step to a two-step process for most regulatory changes. This includes consent agenda approval for noncontroversial and administrative issues and an extension of the former wildlife citizen petition process to parks issues. The new Commission process meets or exceeds all Administrative Procedure Act requirements, while streamlining the regulatory process and creating a more efficient system.



- CPW streamlined the Impact Assistance Grant program in 2013. CPW pays impact assistance grants to counties to offset the taxes that would have been paid if the land remained in private sector ownership. Before the merger of Parks and Wildlife, the counties had to apply to Parks separately from Wildlife. The process has now been merged, with a single, new, individualized web grant application page for each county that has most fields pre-populated to make the application process for parks and wildlife grants as efficient for the counties as possible.
- The merger means more convenience for the customers of the agency. Now, customers can buy a park pass or register a boat at 18 more offices around the state. In addition, hunting and fishing licenses are available at 42 state parks. CPW continues to analyze opportunities to consolidate facilities, eliminate duplication and providing the best customer service.
- To effectively address invasive aquatic nuisance species (ANS), CPW has built on the framework of the strong ANS strategies of the former divisions and quickly and efficiently created a single ANS program. Training, administration and other functions are now combined into a cohesive program.

Planned Savings and Efficiencies of Merged Division Resources

CPW is actively pursuing plans and opportunities for additional cost savings and efficiencies as a result of the merger. These efforts are underway and will continue to be a focus in the coming years.

- Currently, CPW is reviewing all policies and directives of the former Parks and Wildlife divisions for integration into a single set of policies and directives that reflect the requirements of the new agency. Some directives, such as the Uniform, Media Relations, Colorado Open Records Act and Land Use Commenting have already been completed. Division staff is currently analyzing all others for overlap, duplication, relevance and the potential for modification to better serve the needs of the new agency.
- An 'Integrated Parks and Wildlife System' for managing the sale of licenses, permits, and registrations will improve customer service (e.g., one-stop shopping) while reducing costs. Prior to the merger, State Parks was planning to invest a considerable sum to implement its own Point of Sale System; such a system was already in place at the DOW. That system is being replaced and will handle the sale of both parks and wildlife products. Due to the increased volume of transactions, the cost per transaction for wildlife products will also be reduced from what it would otherwise be. This system will also provide better customer information for CPW, which will provide more opportunities for public outreach.
- Given the complexities of the financial systems of the two former divisions, the merger of the two financial accounting and budget sections is focused on a variety of efficiencies: devising a system for allocating funds from different sources; tracking the use and expenditure of funds from different sources; maintaining a strong internal control environment; complying with statutory direction and requirements to maintain the distinct integrity of funding sources; performing and providing oversight activities; and fulfilling reporting responsibilities. Considerable progress has already been made, with final steps in the implementation taking place in fiscal year 14-15.
- The former Divisions' two successful volunteer programs are being integrated into a coordinated, effective approach. A CPW volunteer strategic plan has been written and is now being implemented. As administration, recruitment and management of volunteers is effectively merged, CPW will be better positioned to expand an already extensive volunteer program (CPW has more than 6,500 individuals, contributing nearly \$7.5 million worth of hours equivalent to an additional 163 full time employees).



- Beginning in 2011 pursuant to the program modifications adopted by the State Parks Board, CPW staff has integrated the review process for trail grant applications. Previous to 2011, wildlife staff reviewed and commented on trail grant applications by submitting comments directly to the State Trails Committee and the State Parks Board. Wildlife managers now assist with the preliminary review of applications so that CPW provides one recommendation to the State Trails Committee's Review and Ranking Subcommittees for both motorized and non-motorized trail grants. Each grant application must be reviewed and signed off by CPW's Regional Managers and their staff prior to convening the five grant review and ranking subcommittees.



- The former DOW focused on habitat protection and management through a number of programmatic efforts. The former State Parks developed a conscientious stewardship approach toward natural resources. The new agency has expanded its focus to address broad natural resource management issues, building on the best practices of both former agencies. This includes a more comprehensive approach to the conservation of Colorado's biodiversity.
- The merger is already showing signs that CPW can more effectively understand how changing demographics and other factors affect the delivery of services to its customers across Colorado (and beyond). Rather than two distinct agencies attracting a customer market that overlapped much of the time, CPW can now take an integrated approach that leverages the strengths and expertise of both former agencies.

Ongoing or Emerging Issues

A merged CPW agency is better positioned to deal with a variety of issues and challenges. Through unified leadership, creative thinking and leveraging of resources, CPW and the Commission will approach the biggest issues facing our agency with a stronger and more comprehensive approach.

Financial Challenges

CPW is faced with major financial challenges including declining revenue from license sales, the loss of state parks general or severance tax funds and budget shortfalls in the main Wildlife Cash fund. For this reason, Financial Sustainability is a major priority for the merged agency. To help address this challenge, CPW is in the process of developing financial plans for both parks and wildlife.

A significant result of the merger is that a unified financial strategy for CPW is emerging. With improved transparency of financial reporting and detailed analyses and projections of agency revenue streams, the agency can better understand and address its financial needs, against the context of changing social, economic and environmental patterns. These and other steps are aiming CPW toward financial stability and sustainability.

Participation in Outdoor Recreation

Overall, participation in outdoor recreation is exceptional in Colorado, with about 94 percent of Coloradans participating in different types of outdoor recreation. However, there are several concerning trends, such as declining interest from youth and declining or stagnant hunter and angler participation rates. The merged CPW is now well positioned to address some of these challenges head-on.

Early on, CPW staff recognized the overlap between activities such as fishing and state park visitation. What had been a long-standing cooperative partnership to stock fish in state park reservoirs is evolving into a stronger strategic vision. Even before the merger officially started in July 2011, CPW's marketing and graphics staff developed brochures for fishing and hunting in State Parks and began distributing those to the public. About 25 percent of people visit state parks to fish, and about 35 percent of anglers in Colorado fish on state parks. These synergies position CPW to take the appropriate steps that will build both park visitation and fishing license sales. As an effort to begin capitalizing on such synergies, CPW has developed the 2013 Increasing Angling, Hunting and Park Visitation Long-Term Strategy that outlines strategies to drive positive, effective improvements for three key CPW revenue streams, while providing strong focus on the delivery of quality customer service and satisfaction.

CPW also hopes to reach youth that are increasingly staying indoors or focused on electronic media. As mentioned in one of the main CPW strategic priorities, CPW aims to provide accessible and meaningful recreational and educational opportunities to families and youth. Recognizing that youth and families are the future CPW customer base, CPW will continue to work closely with Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and other partners to effectively reach a high-priority segment of Colorado's population. GOCO lists "youth, families and the outdoors" as one of its top strategic priorities in the 2010 Great Outdoors



CPW Land and Water Acres Ownership and Management as of 7/1/2013

State Parks Properties	Acres
42 State Parks	220,437
23 Recreational/Water-based Parks	
16 Resource-based Parks	
3 River Corridor Parks	
Ownership and Management Partnerships	
Colorado State Land Board	36.2%
Colorado Parks and Wildlife (Fee Title)	23.5%
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	11.5%
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	11.3%
Local Governments	8.0%
Irrigation Companies	6.4%
U.S. Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management	2.6%
Other	0.5%
Conservation Easements in State Parks (Acres)	4,551
Wildlife Properties, 3rd Party Conservation Easements and Public Access Areas	Acres
345 State Wildlife Areas	672,044
76 State Habitat Areas	155,455
19 State Fish Hatcheries	
State Land Board Public Access	484,471
State Land Board Total Surface Control (CPW)	12,361
Ownership and Management Partnerships	
Colorado Parks and Wildlife (Fee Title)	37%
Leasehold Interests (excluding SLB leases)	18%
Conservation Easement	18%
3rd Party Conservation Easement	18%
Public Access/ROW Easement	9%
Conservation Easements in Wildlife Areas	Acres
(Held by 3rd parties; Funded by CPW)	189,432
Walk-in Hunting Access Programs	Acres
Small Game Walk-In Access (WIA) acres	250,000
Big Game Walk-In Access (BGAP) acres	147,013
Ranching for Wildlife	1,200,000

Colorado Strategic Plan. Because of its newly aligned priorities, CPW is committed to investing GOCO funds to reach youth and families. Going forward, CPW is positioned to develop strategies that are congruent with GOCO's that include visiting parks, trail recreation, watchable wildlife, fishing and other recreation.

Environmental Challenges

The challenges presented by environmental changes are not specific to the merger, but these issues continue to be a main focus of the merged agency. Drought, floods, wildfires, insect outbreaks and invasive species present on-going challenges for a resource management agency. Coupled with a growing population and conversion of habitats through development, CPW's role in wildlife management and natural resource stewardship takes on great importance.

To address these environmental challenges, CPW is taking a proactive approach to wildlife management, habitat conservation and natural resource stewardship. As a major water rights owner with expertise on wildlife and recreation, CPW will be a contributor to the Colorado Water Plan. This will allow for these wildlife and recreational concerns to be incorporated into statewide water planning. Additionally, CPW has merged what used to be separate aquatic nuisance species programs to more

efficiently monitor and prevent the spread of these damaging invaders. To address declining mule deer herds, CPW has developed a draft mule deer strategy that incorporates extensive input from stakeholders and wildlife managers. To better implement landscape-scale conservation planning, CPW is also proactively developing 'crucial habitat' mapping that can inform development plans and conservation efforts statewide. Finally, DNR has recently been appointed as a member of the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Noxious Weed Advisory Council, which will allow CPW to be more actively involved in managing a primary threat to state lands, wildlife habitat and recreation. All of these activities of the merged CPW will work toward habitat preservation and resource stewardship, which is one of the primary strategic priorities of the merged agency.

Success Stories

GOCO Partnerships

GOCO Investments in Colorado's Parks and Wildlife
Great Outdoors Colorado invests a portion of Colorado Lottery revenues in parks, trails, wildlife habitats, river corridors, playgrounds and open spaces in all 64 counties. Voters approved a constitutional amendment to create GOCO, which is managed by an independent board and uses no tax dollars. Half of GOCO funds, or more than \$400 million to date, is dedicated to Colorado Parks and Wildlife projects. The list includes building and enhancing parks, trails and facilities; providing water for recreation, preserving natural areas and protecting wildlife species; funding for Youth Corps crews, and support for environmental educational programs, volunteer programs and youth outreach. In 2013, CPW opened Staunton State Park thanks to \$10 million in GOCO investments in land acquisition and infrastructure development.



FY 12-13

Parks Purpose
Wildlife Purpose
Lottery (Parks)

Award

\$11,553,600
\$18,847,618
\$13,563,176

Connecting with Families

- CPW's "Let's Camp" First Time Camper Program is a fun-filled, overnight camping experience for families new to camping. For families willing to try camping but weren't sure how to begin,



this program offers the perfect solution. CPW's knowledgeable and friendly staff gives families hands-on guidance for all the fundamentals of camping, from set up to break down in a safe, comfortable and relaxed setting. The best part is that no prior outdoor knowledge is needed and we even have loaner equipment for the families to use! All equipment except food, sleeping bags and personal utensils/dishes are provided to participants who need it. In 2014, the program was offered at Lake Pueblo and Cheyenne Mountain State Parks.

- CPW's First Day Hikes have now been offered for three years in a row! First Day Hikes is a nationwide initiative taking place in state parks, which gives participants the opportunity to get outdoors to exercise, enjoy nature and welcome the New Year with friends. This year, CPW expanded the program with 18 parks hosting a First Day Hike. Our attendance more than doubled from last year with 713 visitors arriving ready to take a hike on the first day of the year.
- Get Outdoors Colorado: CPW and our Get Outdoors Colorado partners have worked together to foster and facilitate educational experiences and to encourage participants of all skill levels, abilities, and backgrounds to interact with the outdoors in a way that encourages: Healthy, active outdoor lifestyles; Conservation, awareness and respect; and Natural resources stewardship and recreation participation. At the Get Outdoors Day Colorado event in Denver City Park June 14, CPW reached thousands of people who, in many cases, haven't had any contact with our agency. A majority of these participants now have a much more positive impression of our knowledgeable and friendly staff and the services and programs offered by CPW.

Connecting with Schools and Youth

- Schools and Outdoor Learning Environments (SOLE) is designed to increase youth interest and participation in the outdoors by supporting and enhancing existing environmental education programs in Colorado schools and creating a network of sites and facilities to use as outdoor classrooms. In its pilot year (13-14), SOLE focused on fourth graders in two schools. In FY 14-15, CPW will expand the program to reach 1,980 students

at 12 schools. CPW estimates that over a five-year period, SOLE will have the potential to reach fourth and fifth graders in 25 schools throughout the Denver Metro area. Throughout the program, SOLE will also continue to provide professional development for teachers and inclusion of the families to extend the experience beyond the classroom.

- Teaching Environmental Sciences Naturally (TEN) is an inter-agency, site-based, outdoor environmental science program for teachers. TEN's activities focus on local natural resources to provide teachers with hands-on experiences, in their own backyards. CPW has implemented this program throughout the state. Using workshops lasting from two to five days, TEN trains and enables teachers to provide proven, effective, and fun environmental science education to their students.
- CPW's Youth Internship Program was developed to prepare the next generation of natural resource professionals. This pilot project will provide training and hands-on experience for youth interested in pursuing natural resource careers. This program will have the capacity to support approximately 50-75 interns throughout both purposes and will solicit youth between the ages of 16-24. In 2014, we will have 70 interns that will be assigned throughout the state to work on either park-related activities or wildlife-related activities. CPW has a long tradition of preparing young people for careers in natural resources and the Youth Internship Program will further enhance this agency tradition.

Capital Resources

The merger of Parks and Wildlife has formed a team of capital development professionals with a wide array of skills and abilities. The central capital team from the former Division of Wildlife included a Design Team capable of producing project designs in-house. The Parks Division had a team of project managers that were experienced in putting large scale vertical construction projects on the ground utilizing contract services. With both regional and central resources the new program has a much better ability to staff-up projects and react to a variety of circumstances.

One great example is how the agency was able to work as a team to implement flood recovery projects in record time. When the sky opened up and dropped record rainfall in northeastern Colorado in September, Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff rushed to help. CPW swift water rescue teams deployed to the area and agency staff, with their boats, trucks and equipment converged to help with rescue efforts and to protect evacuated neighborhoods. While all of that occurred, our properties were not without their own challenges. St. Vrain State Park suffered significant damage and was closed throughout the fall and winter; however, through teamwork and the dedication of a great volunteers, St. Vrain reopened in the spring of 2014. Eldorado Canyon State Park - one of the world's best known technical rock climbing areas - lost a main road, picnic areas and the park was shut down for weeks. Dozens of state wildlife area properties along the South Platte River were damaged and many were permanently changed as the power of nature pushed through the countryside.





Law Enforcement Academy

At the onset of the merger, CPW started to merge portions of the law enforcement training for District Wildlife Managers and Park Managers. In 2013, both groups of employees met for continuing law enforcement training as part of their annual requirements. In 2014, the hiring processes were overlapped and combined where appropriate. As a result, 2014 saw the first combined hiring class of District Wildlife Manager and Park Manager Trainees. The combined class attended their law enforcement academy training together and has continued to overlap their field training where applicable. This has resulted in a better trained, more versatile class of trainees. Law enforcement training will continue to overlap where there are similar requirements.

Administration in the Law Enforcement and Public Safety branch of CPW has also experienced efficiencies. Some of the resources have been pooled together to assist CPW officers around the state. Additionally, best practices were taken from each former agency to create a more effective branch. There are plans to continue to combine law enforcement programs to better assist our officers in performing daily tasks.

Staunton Visitor Center

With the 2011 merger of Parks and Wildlife coupled with the 2013 opening of Staunton State Park, the assumption was made by our constituents along the 285 corridor that the “typical” Parks & Wildlife services would be available at Staunton State Park. Services our constituents expect:

1. Sale of all agency offered licenses, registrations and passes;
2. Availability of ALL agency brochures (hunting/fishing regulations, maps, park brochures);
3. Staff to provide these combined services

Staunton State Park staff often field requests for these services to be provided in this community. Community members want to spend their hard earned dollars locally instead of driving to Denver. They see us as a contributing member to the local economy. With the current facilities at the park we are unable to meet the expectations of all CPW customers. A CPW Visitor/Service Center at Staunton State Park will meet the expectations of all CPW customers by providing agency wide services to the community and the estimated 20,000 vehicles per day traveling the Hwy. 285 corridor.



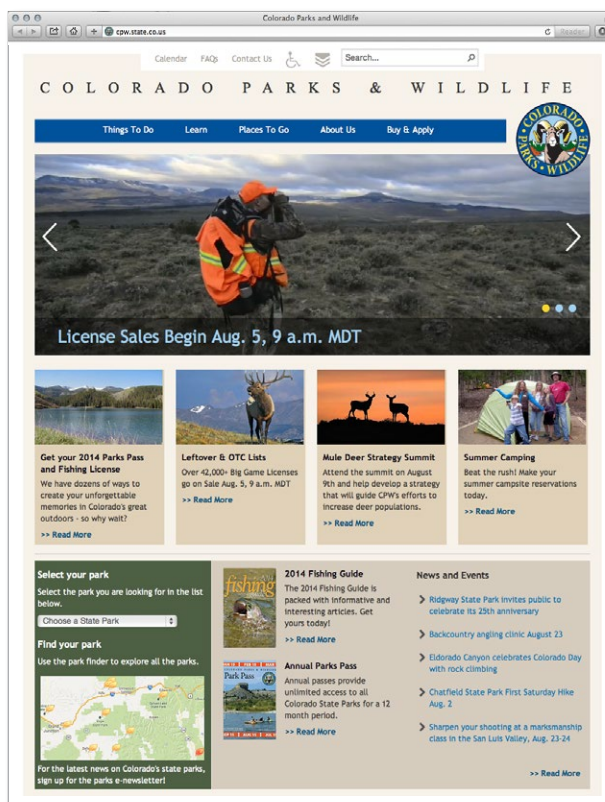


Ranges

Colorado Parks and Wildlife promotes outdoor recreation through the development of new ranges and improvements at Barr Lake State Park, Byer's Canyon, Lathrop State Park, North Sterling State Park, West Rifle Creek State Wildlife Area, the Yampa River Area and Cheyenne Mountain State Park in 2014. Colorado communities are working together to share their knowledge and teach essential skills like archery and safe use of firearms to residents and youth. Kids and parents can learn together and spend quality time learning about safe and proper use of equipment. CPW is looking to expand ranges throughout the state.

Website

Colorado Parks and Wildlife's new website provides a strong communication platform designed to support the needs of a diverse agency and a growing audience. The new website uses best practices to provide improved search, embedded media, dynamic content delivery and a mobile responsive design. While the redesign is focused on delivering an improved user experience, there has also been an emphasis on increased stability and improved overall performance. The new website employs the Office of Information and Technologies' scalable web architecture, load balancing, improved data backup and restoration processes, which collectively minimize service interruption. Since the March 2014 launch, more than 1.6 million users from all 50 states and more than 175 countries have viewed the web pages more than 11 million times. Of the 1.6 million users, 30 percent are accessing the mobile responsive website through tablets, phones and other mobile devices. By connecting the resources between the former State Parks and the Division of wildlife, CPW is able to more effectively leverage a diverse group of subject matter experts, who collaboratively increase the impact of outreach and information efforts.





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